

Clinical Cases.

REPORTS OF CASES OF INSANITY FROM THE INSANE DEPARTMENT OF THE PHILA- DELPHIA HOSPITAL.

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CASE XIII.—*Paranoia.*

Reported by Dr. Allen J. Smith, Assistant Physician.

P. J. O., white, æt. 48, laborer, a native of Ireland, was brought to the hospital March 23d, 1887, having been transferred by order of the Lunacy Committee of the Board of Charities from the State Asylum at Norristown, Pa. There was no known insanity in his family, near or remote, nor any history of hereditary diseases. Personally he had never been subject to serious illnesses, with a single exception. He denied all venereal troubles, except a slight attack of gonorrhœa in his youth. When in the army, during the war of the rebellion, he had a severe sunstroke, from the effects of which he was separated from his comrades several weeks, and because of which he was during the remainder of his service assigned to in-door hospital work. Since then, whenever exposed to heat, he has invariably suffered with intense headaches, dizziness, and other symptoms of the sequelæ of thermic fever.

He is described as a person accustomed to using alcohol moderately, but by no means intemperate in the use of intoxicating liquors. He is a moderate consumer of tobacco. He has a history of twenty-five years' use of opium.

In the autumn of 1883, while employed as an attendant in this institution, he was noticed to be suffering with fits of depression. He was sent away on a vacation with the hope of improvement under change of scene. In a few days he was returned to the institution as a patient, and the diagnosis of *acute suicidal melancholia* recorded. It seems that at this time he suffered from a delusion that he was the devil, although the history is rather vague, the book containing his record having been burned when the institution was destroyed in 1885. He remained in the house until the following February, when he was discharged recovered.

In the autumn following he returned, mildly depressed and still imagining himself one of the evil spirits undergoing torments. These fits of mental pain entirely altered his disposition, which formerly was of a happy buoyant nature.

In the early part of 1885, a complete change came over his delusion and disposition. As he describes it, he saw one night a clearly-defined vision. A number of horrible serpents came out upon his breath from himself and wriggled away, but a tall powerful man with the halo about him met them and slew every one. At the same time, the patient saw upon the ground before him a slip of paper which he picked up, and read this inscription: "Thou art the Son of the living God." A devout Catholic before, he now framed a new system of theology for himself, in which he figured as the carnal representation of the Divine Head. His argument was that in the beginning God had created the world, not from nothing, but from his own personal and material (!) self; that while man, His highest creation, was formed not only from His person but in His likeness, all else partook of His individuality, and held a share in His own eternal life. The patient's claim to supremacy he defended not only by the written statement he had seen in his vision, but by certain other to him indisputable proofs. Years before, some companions had tattooed on his arm his initials, P. J. O'F., and surrounded the letters by a vine and several roses. The letters now became to him the initials of his new title, "Patrick Jesus, Our Father," the roses were the roses of Sharon; the vine, the olive twig. Not that this interpretation was the one intended by his companions when they marked him for life, not that this use of his name was intended by the father who gave it to him, but according to his firm belief the whole train of circumstances was ordained from the first by the Divinity. So, too, to him certain scars upon his hands and feet and brow, the results of injuries well remembered by him and related without hesitation, were the visible proofs of his having suffered on the cross. The very name Patrick was additional evidence that he was the father, "*pater, qui in cælum sit.*" To him, all being part of the One great and good, there could be nothing evil, no devil, no hell. To him in the theory of transmigration of souls there could be no impossibility, nothing degrading. All the children of the Father, there could be no need of worship, and himself that Father, he could not and did not care to expect the rest of the divine creation to bow down before him.

With this delusion he went to the asylum at Norristown after the burning of this institution, and had remained fixed in it ever since. He never speaks of it except when questioned, and although believing it himself, does not demand a like belief from others. In fact, at times he is willing to admit that there is a possibility of its being a delusion, but he never gives it up. He considers himself a sane man, and is such practically on all other points. He is not the subject of any hallucinations; on all other

subjects his intellect is unimpaired as far as our observations have gone. He has an excellent memory even for minutiae. His present disposition is cheerful and happy; he is entirely satisfied with his surroundings. His physical condition is good; he is a large, well-nourished man, with clear open countenance. His knee-jerk, however, is entirely absent. His pupils are unequal in size; the iridic reflex, although slow, is present. There is no evidence of change of sensibility or motility thus far.